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AN INDESTRUCTIBLE FRESCO.

WHAT is claimed to be a system of indestructible fresco is described in a recent report of the committee appointed last spring by the Royal Bavarian Academy of Arts at Munich to investigate the improvements proposed by Herr Keim of that city. The report states, in effect, that the problem of rendering wall-paintings indestructible by climatic action has been solved by Herr Keim; and when the merits of the system are fully known the committee believe that an important change is likely to take place in mural painting, monumental and decorative. The system, founded upon the stereo-chromatic method of Schlotthauer and his fellow-workers, embodies improvements in the fundamental ground and the painting ground, in the preparation of the colors and the concluding fixing of the picture. We give the description of these improvements in the form published, which however, seems occasionally obscure:

"*The Wall Ground.*—The wall or fundamental ground is in some respects the same as that employed in the stereo-chromatic process, being a mortar composed of slaked lime, sand and water, which after drying is flattened with rough sandstone, and afterwards impregnated with soluble silicate of potash. Before applying this mortar it is necessary, in new buildings, that the walling should be perfectly dried, while in older buildings the part of the wall intended to be treated should be laid bare to the stone and the commissures scraped out.

"*The Painting Ground.*—This consists, in the new process, of a mixture of four parts (by measure) of quartz sand, three and a half parts of marble sand, half part of fossil meal and one part of quicklime, which is stirred up with distilled water. The mass thus produced is strengthened by the admixture of carbonate of lime in the crystalline form of marble sand, which, from its rough and porous nature, readily absorbs the colors which are subsequently applied. The addition of silicic acid, finely decomposed in the form of fossil meal, promotes the formation of silicate of lime, and thereby increases the hardness of the material and its capacity to resist chemical and mechanical influences of a trying character.

"*The Colors.*—After being thoroughly dried this painting ground is saturated with silicic fluor acid, which destroys any crystalline particles of carbonate of lime which may be on the surface, and opens the pores of the material for the absorption of the colors to be laid on. According to the stereo-chromatic process the colors are only laid on with water, but by Herr Keim's system each color receives in its preparation a certain admixture of a nature suited to its special properties, which is intended to promote the solidity and durability of the work.

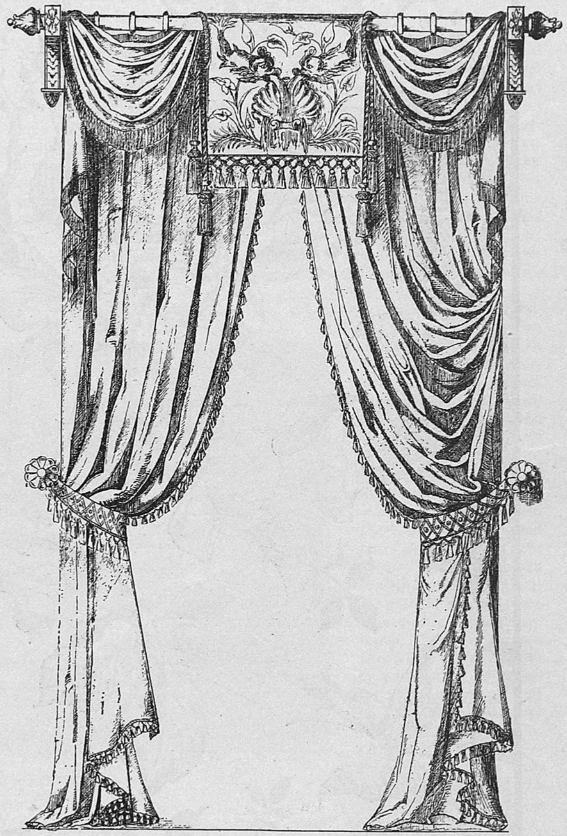
"In order to prevent the darkening or lightening in the shade of certain tones of color, which is sometimes produced by the final application of the soluble glass used for the purpose of fixing, the colors receive before use an admixture of potash and ammonia. By this means they do not alter in shade, and the painter is saved the trouble of calculating what shade the color he is applying will be after it is subjected to the process of fixing. The colors are delivered by the factory almost ready for use, only requiring to be rendered thinner according to circumstances by the addition of some water.

"*Fixing.*—The fixing of the completed picture is finally done by a wash of soluble glass containing an admixture of caustic potash and caustic ammonia. This is not applied cold, but warm, to the wall surface, which has previously been dried to the stone. When the weather is cold or damp this drying is promoted by a specially constructed iron stove. To complete the process and to prevent the subsequent appearance of the alkali, which becomes free in the form of a white dusty coating, the fixed picture is again treated with carbonate of ammonia. For subsequent cleaning, washing with water is sufficient."

It is stated as an illustration of the weather resisting properties of wall paintings executed according to the Keim system, that such a picture was buried during the whole winter of 1880 in the snow under a gutter without the slightest injury resulting. The committee to which allusion has been made, has further established the fact that the placing in hot or cold water, and the application with brushes of water, alkalies, diluted and even concentrated acids, produce no injurious effects worth naming, and the pictures thus experimented upon continued after these tests to display hardness and imperviousness to mechanical influences.

Apart from these properties of resistance to the effect of the climate, the clear white painting ground, it is said, shows up the colors, particularly ultramarine shades, in a bright and effective manner. The paints are easily applied and blend well together; the production of a pleasing and harmonious effect being facilitated in many ways by the process of Herr Keim.

TO MAKE A POLISH FOR CARVED CABINET WORK.—Dissolve two ounces of seed lac and two ounces of white resin in one pint of spirits of wine. This varnish or polish must be laid on the work when warm, and if the wood can also be warmed slightly, it will be very much better. At all costs moisture and dampness must be avoided. It must be used with a brush for the standards and pillars of cabinet work, but the carved portions are polished as follows: Varnish the parts with the common wood varnish, and, having dressed them off where necessary with emery paper, apply the polish employed for the other portions of the work.



DRAPED HANGING OF SPANISH SATIN WITH PANEL OF PAINTED SILK.
DESIGNED BY J. P. MCHUGH.

FRENCH POLISH.—A capital French polish can be made as follows, though it is somewhat troublesome: Take one pint of soft water, and mix with it twice as much vinegar, then break into small pieces a quarter of a pound of glue; stir this into the vinegar and water, with half a pound of logwood chips, a quarter of an ounce of finely powdered indigo, with a quarter of an ounce each of best soap and isinglass. Put the whole of this mixture on the fire, and let it boil gently for at least a quarter of an hour, then strain it carefully, put into bottles, and cork tightly. When cold it is ready to be used, with a clean soft sponge for applying it.

GILDING ON MARBLE.—To gild on marble, mix white lead with fat oil to a proper consistency, and then with turps, paint the portion to be gilded with the mixture, afterwards sizing with japanner's gold size, and when it is dry, applying the gold leaf, the best materials only being employed.